



THE ALABAMA VETERAN



COMMAND SGT. MAJ. BENNIE ADKINS STATE VETERANS HOME

ENTERPRISE, ALA.



SBVA APPROVES NEW STATE VETERANS HOME TO BE NAMED AFTER MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT BENNIE ADKINS

The Alabama State Board of Veterans Affairs (SBVA) approved naming the new state Veterans home in Enterprise after U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie Adkins on July 9.

The SBVA made the announcement at its quarterly meeting held at the Enterprise Civic Center with the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA), Enterprise Mayor William E. Cooper, officials from Fort Rucker, and Enterprise and Coffee County officials present.

Adkins was deployed to Vietnam three times, with his most heroic effort during his second tour leading to receiving a Medal of Honor in 2014. He distinguished himself during 38 hours of close-combat fighting while serving as an Intelligence Sergeant with the 5th Special Forces Group at Camp A Shau in the Republic of Vietnam from March 9 to 12, 1966.

When the camp was attacked, then Sgt. 1st Class Adkins rushed through intense enemy fire and manned a mortar position defending the camp. He continued to mount a defense even while receiving several direct hits from enemy mortars. He temporarily turned over the mortar to another soldier and ran through exploding mortar rounds to rescue several soldiers wounded near the center of camp. By the end of the battle, Adkins was hit 18 times by enemy fire.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie Adkins is an American hero who was well-known statewide for his bravery and heroism, especially in southeastern Alabama with his close ties to the community," said SBVA Vice-Chairman Chad Richmond. "Command Sgt. Maj. Adkins was loved by everyone who knew him, and it is an honor to have his name on the new state Veterans home."

Enterprise was chosen as the new home's location in early January 2020. The site of the facility will be on 108 acres off Highway 51 just north of Yancey Parker Industrial Park. This location was chosen largely because of the considerable Veteran population in Coffee County. Studies indicate the county, and Enterprise in particular, will see a significant growth in the Veteran population in coming years.

"It's wonderful to finally be able to share this vision with you all in a tangible form that we can all look forward to and prepare for together," said Mayor Cooper. "We realize how important it is to meet the needs of Veterans, and we are thankful for the ADVA's work to do just that with professionalism, integrity, compassion, and commitment."

Williams Blackstock Architects in Birmingham has been tasked with creating the facility's design. The facility will be 182,000 square feet and house 174 residents. Once in full operation, it will provide jobs for more than 200 people.

"The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs is thrilled to continue serving Veterans in the Wiregrass with this new state Veterans home," said ADVA Commissioner Kent Davis. "Enterprise is proud of its military history and we are grateful for the outpouring of support by the community and its leadership. We're looking forward to breaking ground early next year."

Nominations for the new state Veterans home were submitted from the public. Nominations were either in honor of a Veteran, after a person who had a pivotal role in locating the home in Enterprise, or descriptive of the location or region of the home. This will be Alabama's fifth state Veterans home and construction is expected to be completed at the end of 2023.





Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins

MEDAL OF HONOR

VIETNAM WAR

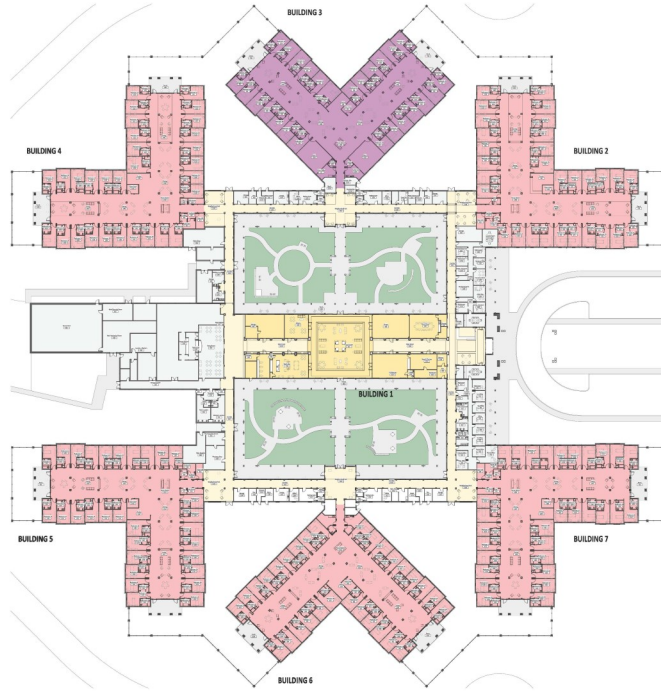
The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of Congress the Medal of Honor to

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS
BENNIE G. ADKINS
UNITED STATES ARMY

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Sergeant First Class Bennie G. Adkins distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as an Intelligence Sergeant with Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, during combat operations against an armed enemy at Camp A Shau, Republic of Vietnam from March 9 to 12, 1966. When the camp was attacked by a large North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force in the early morning hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense enemy fire and manned a mortar position continually adjusting fire for the camp, despite incurring wounds as the mortar pit received several direct hits from enemy mortars. Upon learning that several soldiers were wounded near the center of camp, he temporarily turned the mortar over to another soldier, ran through exploding mortar rounds and dragged several comrades to safety. As the hostile fire subsided, Sergeant First Class Adkins exposed himself to sporadic sniper fire while carrying his wounded comrades to the camp dispensary. When Sergeant First Class Adkins and his group of defenders came under heavy small arms fire from members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group that had defected to fight with the North Vietnamese, he maneuvered outside the camp to evacuate a seriously wounded American and draw fire all the while successfully covering the rescue. When a resupply air drop landed outside of the camp perimeter, Sergeant First Class Adkins, again, moved outside of the camp walls to retrieve the much needed supplies. During the early morning hours of March 10, 1966 enemy forces launched their main attack and within two hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins was the only man firing a mortar weapon. When all mortar rounds were expended, Sergeant First Class Adkins began placing effective recoilless rifle fire upon enemy positions. Despite receiving additional wounds from enemy rounds exploding on his position, Sergeant First Class Adkins fought off intense waves of attacking Viet Cong. Sergeant First Class Adkins eliminated numerous insurgents with small arms fire after withdrawing to a communications bunker with several soldiers. Running extremely low on ammunition, he returned to the mortar pit, gathered vital ammunition and ran through intense fire back to the bunker. After being ordered to evacuate the camp, Sergeant First Class Adkins and a small group of soldiers destroyed all signal equipment and classified documents, dug their way out of the rear of the bunker and fought their way out of the camp. While carrying a wounded soldier to the extraction point he learned that the last helicopter had already departed. Sergeant First Class Adkins led the group while evading the enemy until they were rescued by helicopter on March 12, 1966. During the thirty-eight-hour battle and forty-eight hours of escape and evasion, fighting with mortars, machine guns, recoilless rifles, small arms, and hand grenades, it was estimated that Sergeant First Class Adkins killed between one hundred thirty five and one hundred seventy five of the enemy while sustaining eighteen different wounds to his body. Sergeant First Class Adkins' extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces and the United States Army.

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ABOVE: Williams Blackstock Architects in Birmingham has been tasked with creating the design for Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie Adkins State Veterans Home. The facility will be approximately 182,000 square feet and house 174 residents.
BOTTOM LEFT: The facility will be located on 108 acres off Highway 51 just north of Yancey Parker Industrial Park.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Once in full operation, the facility is expected to provide jobs for more than 200 people in the community.

